# COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT ALLOCATION PLAN

Federal Fiscal Year 2016 October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

## **DANNEL P. MALLOY**

**GOVERNOR** 

Submitted by: Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby Connecticut Department of Social Services July 20, 2015

## The Community Services Block Grant Allocation Plan FFY 2016

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## THE COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT ALLOCATION PLAN

## For Federal Fiscal Year 2016

October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2016

#### I. OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

## A. Purpose

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is administered by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through its administrative agency, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Community Services (OCS). The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) is designated as the principal state agency for the allocation and administration of the block grant within the state of Connecticut.

The purposes of the Community Services Block Grant are:

- 1. To provide assistance to states and local communities, working through a network of community action agencies for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient (particularly families who are attempting to transition off a state program carried out under part A of the Social Security Act (42 USC 601, et. Seq.)); and
- 2. To accomplish the goals described in paragraph (1) through:
  - a) the strengthening of community capabilities for planning and coordinating a broad range of federal, state, local, and private resources related to the elimination of poverty, so that these resources can be used in a manner responsive to local needs and conditions;
  - b) the coordination of a range of services to meet the needs of low-income families and individuals, so that these services have a measurable impact on the reduction of poverty in the community and in helping families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency;
  - the promotion of innovative and effective community-based approaches to addressing the causes and effects of poverty and community breakdown;
  - d) the promotion of participation by the low-income residents and members of the groups served by programs funded through block grants made under this subtitle in planning and coordinating activities and programs designed to respond to the unique problems and needs within their communities; and
  - e) the broadening of the resource base for programs directed at the elimination of poverty so as to secure a more active role in the provision of services for:
    - (1) Private religious, charitable, and neighborhood-based organizations; and

(2) Individual citizens, business, labor, and professional groups, who are able to influence the quantity and quality of opportunities and services for the poor.

## B. Major Use of Funds

As federally mandated, at least ninety percent (90%) of the funds made available to the state must be used to make grants to Community Action Agencies (CAAs), Community Action Programs (CAPs), or Limited Purpose Agencies (LPAs) that performed the functions of a Community Action Agency in fiscal year 1981, or their successors. These funds must be used for purposes consistent with the federal goals identified above.

There are currently ten CAAs and one LPA that qualify for CSBG funding in Connecticut. Each CAA has a specified service area. In Connecticut, CSBG funds are primarily used by CAAs to provide planning and coordination, organize services, encourage innovative and effective approaches to addressing the causes of poverty, broadening the resource base for programs and services, and for core administrative expenses. With CSBG as base funding, CAAs operate a wide range of programs with other funds from DSS and other state agencies, federal agencies, and municipalities, as well as private donations. These programs include, but are not limited to, Energy Assistance, Housing and Shelter programs, Child Care and Youth Development Services, Holistic Case Management Services, and Nutrition Services.

During late FFY 2014 and FFY 2015, the Department carried out a number of activities associated with the identification of eligible entities to serve the catchment areas previously serviced by Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now, Inc. (NEON): Greater Stamford (Greenwich, Stamford, and Darien) and Greater Norwalk (New Canaan, Norwalk, Weston, Wilton, and Westport). On August 11, 2014, the Department issued a Request for Application for the Greater Stamford catchment area. On April 2, 2015, the Department identified Community Action Agency of Western CT (CAAWC) as the successful applicant for the Greater Stamford catchment area. Department staff are negotiating contract deliverables with CAAWC to assist with the successful establishment of a community action presence within the Greater Stamford catchment area.

On August 14, 2014, the Department issued a Request for Interest for the Greater Norwalk catchment area and on March 3, 2015, the Department issued a Request for Qualifications for the Greater Norwalk catchment area. The Greater Norwalk procurement has closed and is currently being reviewed by the evaluation team. Once the successful applicant is announced, Department staff will negotiate contract deliverables to assist with the successful establishment of a community action presence within the Greater Norwalk catchment area.

CAAs also prepare annual Community Action Plans, as required under the Act, which address how the goals of the block grant will be furthered by the efforts of the entire Community Action Agency, rather than just those programs funded directly or indirectly by CSBG. Key components of the Community Action Plan include the following: community needs assessment; description of service delivery system, linkages, and coordination of funds and innovative projects; and performance measurement outcomes and measures. CSBG funds must be used to serve or improve the wellbeing of individuals with incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty level. CSBG funds may not be used to support political activities or to pay for construction unless a specific waiver is obtained by the state from the federal government.

The state is permitted to retain up to five percent (5%) of the block grant for administration, and may use the remaining five (5%) of the funds allocated for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, training, technical assistance, and capacity building for eligible entities, and innovative programs that further the purposes of the Act. The department shall utilize the administration allotment to provide direct program monitoring, training, and oversight functions to ensure programmatic compliance.

#### C. Federal Allotment Process

CSBG funds are allotted based on the national appropriation and the states' share of funds distributed under Sec. 221 of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 for federal fiscal year 1981.

## D. Estimated Federal Funding

Federal funding for FFY 2016 has not been finalized. For purposes of this plan, the federal funding allocation for Connecticut for FFY 2016 is estimated to be \$8,077,366, which is equal to the state's final FFY 2015 allocation. During FFY 2015, the Community Services Block Grant was funded at a national level of \$657.4 million.

## E. Estimated Expenditures and Proposed Allocations

Provisions of Section 210 of the federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 include requirements that at least ninety percent (90%) of the funds made available to the state must be used to make grants to CAAs or LPAs. Accordingly, the state proposes ninety percent (90%) or \$7,269,630 of the estimated FFY 2016 block grant funding be granted to CAAs and LPAs in Connecticut. The state plans to retain five percent (5%) of the FFY 2016 block grant funds or \$403,868 for administration. Through the administration allotment, the department will provide appropriate quality assurance and programmatic staffing to ensure sufficient programmatic and fiscal oversight and training and monitoring activities. The balance of the allocation, \$403,868 (5%), will be used for discretionary projects that may include training, technical assistance, technology support, statewide projects and innovative programs related to the purposes of the Act.

In addition to the estimated FFY 2016 block grant funding, carry forward of previous year CSBG funds (currently estimated at \$517,095) will be utilized in Grants to Eligible Entities, bringing that category's total proposed expenditures to \$7,786,725. (Note: the carryforward amount includes CSBG monies identified for the catchment area previously served by NEON which will be reserved for the catchment area for FFY 2016). The distribution of funds to eligible entities is based on a formula referenced in Sec. 17b-888 of the Connecticut General Statutes and further described in Section H below.

#### F. Proposed Allocation Changes From Last Year

Block grant regulations specify how funds will be allocated. A total of \$7,786,725 is proposed to be granted to CAAs or LPAs, which represents 90% of total block grant funding and \$517,095 in carry forward funding. This amount represents a 4% increase in funding from FFY 15. While it appears from Table III on page 11 that some entities are receiving decreases in funding, FFY 15 expenditures include delayed funding from FFY 14, which resulted in an artificial inflation of funding numbers in FFY 15. Allocations for FFY 16 represent the base amounts that entities should be receiving pursuant to the statutorily required formula.

In addition, FFY 2016 Personal Services, Fringe, and Other Expenses are increasing from FFY 15 due to the hiring of additional staff within the Office of Community Services to ensure that CSBG contractor monitoring and federal requirements are being followed as directed by HHS.

## **G.** Contingency Plan

This allocation plan has been prepared under the assumption that the FFY 2016 Community Services Block Grant for Connecticut will be funded at the level of \$8,077,366. In the event that anticipated funding is either increased or reduced, federal law, as noted above, specifies the proportion of funds allocated to Community Action Agencies, Discretionary Programs, and Administration. Should significant federal funding reductions occur as a result of sequestration, the Department, with input from Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA) and the CAAs, will develop a process to determine priorities for applying the reductions. If additional funds become available, they will be carried over into FFY 2017 in order to ensure ongoing programmatic coverage and to mitigate the potential for future reductions in FFY 2017.

## **H.** State Allocation Planning Process

Sections 17b-885 through 17b-895 of the Connecticut General Statutes implement the federal requirements governing Community Action Agencies and further stipulate that allocated funds be distributed through an agreement negotiated between the Department and Community Action Agencies. Under the present agreement, negotiated and implemented in 1997, each CAA will receive a base amount that equals one-half of their FFY 1996 allocation. Remaining funds are allocated to CAAs based on the number of individuals in each CAA service area (as a proportion of the state total) at or below 125% of the federal poverty guideline according to census data.

#### I. Grant Provisions

In order to obtain CSBG funding, Connecticut must submit and obtain federal approval of the state plan that satisfies the requirements of Sec. 676 of the Reauthorization Act. Under these requirements, the state must:

- designate a state agency to serve as lead agency;
- hold a public hearing to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed use of funds:
- conduct monitoring in accordance with Section 678B of the Reauthorization Act;
- hold a legislative hearing at least once every three (3) years in conjunction with the development of the state plan;
- use funds received to support activities which assist low-income families and individuals to:
  - 1. achieve self-sufficiency;
  - 2. secure and retain meaningful employment;
  - 3. attain an adequate education;

- 4. make better use of available income;
- 5. obtain and maintain adequate housing;
- 6. obtain emergency assistance; and
- 7. achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community;
- address the needs of youth in low-income communities;
- assure that CSBG funds are used to coordinate with and make more effective use of other programs with related purposes;
- describe how it uses its discretionary funds;
- include information provided by eligible entities on how CSBG funds will be used;
- assure that eligible entities provide emergency food, supplies and related services to combat hunger and malnutrition;
- assure that the state and eligible entities coordinate with and establish linkages between governmental and other programs to avoid duplication;
- provide for coordination between programs to ensure that energy crisis intervention programs are conducted in each community;
- assure that the state will cooperate with related federal investigations;
- assure that funding for eligible entities will not be terminated or reduced below their proportional share without cause;
- provide opportunities for state and eligible entities to form partnerships with other organizations, including religious, charitable and community organizations;
- establish mechanisms for low-income individuals or organizations that feel they are underrepresented on the board of a CAA to petition for representation;
- require that each CAA submit a Community Action Plan as a condition of funding;
- require that all eligible entities participate in the Results Oriented Management and Accountability system; and
- require that each eligible entity have a Board of Directors composed of equal numbers of low-income persons, local elected officials or their designees, and other individuals or organizations serving low-income people in the community.

Connecticut's most recent federal application for CSBG funding was approved for the period October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2016. Connecticut's next federal application for CSBG funding for the period October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2016 is due to ACF by September 1, 2015.

## Additional Requirements:

On January 28, 2015, OCS issued a Dear Colleague letter regarding CSBG Draft State and Federal Accountability Measures and Appendices. Pursuant to the terms of the letter, OCS is requiring states, no later than FFY 2016, to collect and begin reporting on state CSBG Accountability Measures through their online state plan and annual reports. Concurrently, OCS will collect and begin reporting on federal CSBG Accountability Measures in FFY 2016.

The thirteen (13) State accountability measures address efficiency and effectiveness characteristics such as timeliness, accuracy, standards, and stakeholder satisfaction in the critical activities and functions listed below:

- Development of State plan, including involving the eligible entities
- Implementation of State plan including:
  - Distribution of funds
  - o Use of remainder/discretionary funds
  - o Grantee monitoring and corrective action
  - o Data collection, analysis, and reporting
  - o Organizational standards for eligible entities
  - State linkages and communication

In addition to accountability measures for states, on January 26, 2015, OCS issued Information Memorandum Transmittal No. 138 referencing the "State Establishment of Organizational Standards for CSBG Eligible Entities under 678B of the CSBG Act, 42 U.S.C. § 9901 et seq." The categories associated with the Organization Standards for CAAs are as follows:

- 1. Maximum Feasible Participation
  - Consumer Input and Involvement
  - Community Engagement
  - Community Assessment
- 2. Vision and Direction
  - Organizational Leadership
  - Board Governance
  - Strategic Planning
- 3. Operations and Accountability
  - Human Resource Management
  - Financial Operations and Oversight
  - Data and Analysis

The Department and the CAA network are working collaboratively to develop and implement a system to ensure compliance with the federal requirements. The Department has convened a workgroup comprised of members from the Community Services Block Grant office, as well as representatives from the CAA Network (e.g. senior management, fiscal, human resources, quality assurance, planning, etc.). It is the Department's expectation that through this process of consistent communication, Connecticut CAAs will be informed of compliance requirements for each of the categories associated with the above mentioned organizational standards. The Department will also utilize this process to assist with the identification of training that is above and beyond the standard training.

## II. Tables

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## Table A

## COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS AND EXPENDITURES

PROGRAM CATEGORY	FFY 14 Expenditures	FFY 15 Estimated Expenditures	FFY 16 Proposed Expenditures	Percentage Change from FFY 15 to FFY 16		
Grants to Eligible Entities	\$ 6,309,312	\$ 7,519,008	\$ 7,786,725	4%		
Discretionary Programs	\$ 397,637	\$ 505,471	\$ 403,868	-20%		
Administration <sup>1</sup>	\$ 211,638	\$ 286,747	\$ 403,868	41%		
TOTAL	\$ 6,918,587	\$ 8,311,226	\$8,594,461	3%		
SOURCE OF FUNDS						
Block Grant	\$ 8,005,572	\$ 8,077,366	\$ 8,077,366	0%		
Carry Forward from Previous Year <sup>2</sup>	\$ 653,322	\$ 1,740,307	\$1,506,447	-13%		
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$ 8,658,894	\$ 9,817,673	\$9,583,813	-2%		

### **Notes:**

<sup>1.</sup> FFY 2016 Personal Services and Fringe are increasing due to the hiring of additional staff within the Office of Community Services. These staff will be dedicated to the CSBG program to provide appropriate oversight of the program consistent with federal requirements.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2.</sup> FFY 2016 carryforward amount of \$1,506,477 includes \$517,095 in CSBG programmatic funds not issued during FFY 2015 for the CAA catchment area previously served by Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now, Inc. (NEON). The Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut, Inc. (CAAWC) was identified as the Greater Stamford service provider and CAA for Greater Norwalk has not been determined at the time of the publication of this report.

Table B
COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT
SUMMARY OF PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

	FFY 14 Expenditures	FFY 15 Estimated Expenditures <sup>1</sup>	FFY 16 Proposed Expenditures <sup>1</sup>	Percentage Change from FFY 15 to FFY 16
Number of Positions (FTE)	1.4	1.75	2.75	
Personal Services	\$ 84,559	\$ 133,480	\$ 208,968	57%
Fringe Benefits	\$ 66,767	\$ 83,806	\$ 142,334	70%
Other Expenses	\$ 60,312	\$ 69,461	\$ 52,566	-24%
Equipment				
Contracts				
Grants to:				
Local Government				
Other State Agencies				
Private Agencies	\$ 6,706,949	\$ 8,024,479	\$ 8,190,593	2%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 6,918,587	\$8,311,226	\$8,594,461	3%
	Sources of FFY 14 Allocations	Sources of FFY 15 Allocations	Sources of FFY 16 Allocations	Percentage Change from FFY 15 to FFY 16
Carry Forward from Previous Year	\$ 653,322	\$ 1,740,307	\$1,506,447	-13%
Federal Block Grant Funds	\$ 8,005,572	\$ 8,077,366	\$ 8,077,366	0%
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$ 8,658,894	\$ 9,817,673	\$9,583,813	-2%

#### **Notes:**

<sup>1.</sup> FFY 2016 Personal Services and Fringe are increasing due to the hiring of additional staff within the Office of Community Services. These staff will be dedicated to the CSBG program to provide appropriate oversight of the program consistent with federal requirements.

## **TABLE C**

## COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

## SUMMARY OF SERVICE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Service Category	Objective	Service/Activity	Number Serviced FFY 14	Performance Measures
Core Funding for	Provide core administrative	Provide planning,	350,488 persons served	See below
Eligible Entities	support for CAAs to organize	administrative, and	through 11 CAAs in	
	services and coordinate funding	financial management	FFY '14*	
	for programs that serve	support to Community		
	individuals and families at or	Action Agencies to		
	below 125% of the federal	coordinate grants and		
	poverty level.	services to low-income		
		residents.		

<sup>\*</sup> As reported in Part I, Section G, Lines 3 and 4 of the annual federal CSBG MIS report for 2014.

#### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

## AS REPORTED IN THE ANNUAL CT FFY 2014 COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT INFORMATION SYSTEM SURVEY

Conditions of poverty reduced or eliminated as measured by the # of clients who, as a result of CSBG assistance:

- 1. Obtained supports to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment [Employment]
- 2. Increased in financial assets or financial skills [Income Management]
- 3. Participated in education and self-improvement programs [Education]
- 4. Maintained adequate housing/independent living situation [Housing]
- 5. Advanced towards or achieved self-sufficiency [Self-Sufficiency]
- 6. Obtained emergency assistance [Emergency Services]
- 7. Engaged in activities that support and promote their own well-being and that of their community [Participation in Community]

## III. ALLOCATIONS BY PROGRAM CATEGORY

## COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

## FFY 15 ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES AND FFY 16 PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

	FFY 14 Expenditures	FFY 15 Estimated Expenditures <sup>6</sup>	FFY 16 Proposed Expenditures
Major Program Categories	(including carry forward funds)	(including carry forward funds)	(including carry forward funds)
Grants to Eligible Entities			
Action for Bridgeport Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)	806,669	\$884,091	\$845,380
ACCESS Agency, Inc.	417,846	461,040	439,443
Bristol Community Organization, Inc. (BCO)	180,034	196,798	188,416
Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc. (CAANH)	1,006,110	1,101,298	1,053,704
Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut, Inc. (CAAWC) formerly known as Community Action for Committee of Danbury, Inc. (CACD)	273,089	301,513	287,301
Community Renewal Team of Greater Hartford, Inc. (CRT)	1,648,000	1,816,618	1,732,309
Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA)	137,295	150,905	144,100
Connecticut Action Agency of Western Connecticut, Inc. (CAAWC) designated as the CAA for Greater Stamford area during FFY 2015) <sup>1</sup>	0	144,468	724,516
CAA to be designated through competitive procurement (Greater Norwalk area) <sup>2</sup>	0	54,863	438,904
CAA one-time increase to assist with organizational standards. CAAs will receive proportionate share of award based upon their percentage of CSBG funding associated with FFY 2016 awards. <sup>3</sup>	0	382,379	0
Human Resource Agency of New Britain, Inc. (HRANB)	295,373	323,601	309,487
New Opportunities, Inc. (NOI)	927,711	1,022,195	974,953
TEAM, Inc.	203,960	223,558	213,759
Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA)	413,225	455,681	434,453
Formula Allocations – Total	6,309,312	7,519,008	7,786,725
Discretionary Programs <sup>4</sup>	397,637	505,471	403,868
State Agency Administration <sup>5</sup>	211,638	286,747	403,868
TOTAL CSBG	\$6,918,587	\$8,311,226	\$8,594,461

#### **Notes:**

- <sup>1</sup> CAAWC was selected as the CAA for the Greater Stamford during the middle of FFY 2015 and advised the Department that it estimates it will spend \$144,468 during FFY 2015 to carry out activities associated with to the Greater Stamford catchment area. Allocation identified for proposed FFY 2016 includes carryforward (\$329,951) targeted for the Greater Stamford catchment area.
- <sup>2.</sup> The CAA designated to provide CSBG services for the Greater Norwalk catchment has not yet been selected. The responses to the procurement are currently with the review team and the Department expects to announce the applicant awarded the right to negotiate a contract prior to the end of FFY 2015. The Department estimates that approximately 25% of the award should be made available, as services will not be provided for a full year. The proposed allocation for FFY 2016 includes carryforward (\$187,144) targeted for the Greater Norwalk catchment area.
- <sup>3.</sup> The Department proposes to issue one-time payments to all CAAs (including the LPA) to assist with compliance training for organizational standards. CAAs will receive a proportionate share of the balance allocation based upon their percentage of CSBG funding associated with FFY 2016 awards. The breakout will be as follows: ABCD (\$48,806); ACCESS (\$25,370); BCO (\$10,878); CAANH (\$60,833); CAAWC (\$16,857); CRT (\$100,010); CAFCA (\$8,319); HRANB (\$17,867); NOI (\$56,286); TEAM (\$12,341); and TVCCA (\$25,082).
- <sup>4.</sup> CSBG discretionary resources will be utilized as follows: 80% capacity building activities; 15% other CSBG purposes, and 5% other purposes.
- <sup>5</sup> FFY 2016 Personal Services, Fringe, and Other Expenses are increasing due to the hiring of additional staff within the Office of Community Services to ensure that CSBG contractor monitoring and federal requirements are being followed as directed by HHS.
- <sup>6.</sup> FFY 15 expenditures include delayed funding from FFY 14, which resulted in an artificial inflation of funding numbers in FFY 15. Allocations for FFY 16 represent the base amounts that entities should be receiving pursuant to the statutorily required formula.